

Jerzy Giedroyc – Paris Culture – Literary Institute – Secret Couriers.



Jerzy Giedroyc a Polish writer and editor of the highly influential Paris-based periodical *Kultura*.

Kultura (Polish: Culture) sometimes referred to as *Kultura Paryska* was a leading Polish-émigré literary-political magazine, published from 1947 to 2000 by Instytut Literacki (the Literary Institute), initially in Rome and then in Paris.

It was edited and produced by Jerzy Giedroyc and ceased publication upon his death.

Jerzy Giedroyc was one of the main reasons why *Kultura* enjoyed an unwavering prestige and a constant stream of esteemed contributors that enabled it to play a prominent role in Polish literary life. *Kultura* published polemics and articles, including those by Nobel Prize for Literature laureates Czesław Miłosz and Wisława Szymborska, as well as works by numerous other authors. The Literary critics such as Maria Janion, Wojciech Karpiński, Jan Kott, and Ryszard Nycz also contributed.

Kultura was and continues to be essential reading for students of Polish literature.

Over the years it printed, and popularized the names of, many leading Polish writers and poets living under Communism and as anti-communist political refugees throughout the Polish diaspora, such as Gustaw Herling-Grudziński, Witold Gombrowicz, Marek Hłasko, Józef Czapski, Konstanty Jeleński, and Bogdan Czaykowski.

After many letters and conversations with Giedroyc, Czesław Miłosz asked for asylum in France. He also helped Leszek Kołakowski and Zygmunt Bauman emigrate.

Kultura was becoming an ever stronger Polish political and cultural center.

It featured works by writers and poets behind the Iron Curtain, such as Zbigniew Herbert, Marek Hłasko, Boris Pasternak, Anna Akhmatova and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, as well as the works of émigré journalists, such as Konstanty "Kot" Jeleński, Stanisław Swianiewicz and Juliusz Mieroszewski.



Lech Wałęsa leader of Polish Solidarność, the former President of Poland and Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

Already in the 1950s, the house in Maisons-Laffitte became a political center conducting secret actions in communist countries. In the 1970s and 1980s, when strikes and Solidarity (Polish: Solidarność, full name Independent Self-Governing Trade Union "Solidarity – leaders Anna Walentynowicz, Lech Wałęsa) gave hope for Poland's liberation from the communist regime, Kultura increased its aid to domestic intellectuals. One of the main activities was smuggling "Kultura" into Poland by secret couriers.